

YOU ARE INVITED to take a "picture" tour of Hammer School. Later, you may want to visit us in person . . . and you will be very welcome!

Hammer School is pleasantly situated on 9 rolling, wooded acres at 1909 East Wayzata Boulevard in Wayzata, Minnesota.

One of the first private schools of its kind for mentally retarded, the school was founded in 1923 by Miss Alvina Hammer. Miss Evelyn Carlson, the present director, became owner in 1947; then in 1960 the school was incorporated as a non-profit organization.

Hammer School is supported, first, by the families and friends of its students who pay tuition fees. This income must be augmented by gifts.

The school is equipped to handle over 40 resident students, and there are usually 10 day-students. With this enrollment the school can do its best for every student.

Religious beliefs have no bearing on the "acceptability" of students, and observances of all faiths are honored.


Let's see what Hammer School is like . . .



The Hammer SCHOOL



"The aim of Hammer School is to help each student develop his limited capabilities, in an atmosphere of security and confidence, so he may feel that he is also a part of the world around him. Some students will eventually become self-supporting; others will be able to return home, trained so they will not be a burdensome care, ready to become a full-fledged member of the family."

MISS EVELYN CARLSON

Director

On a sunshiny midsummer day a visitor to Hammer School gets a first impression of coolness and tranquility. Rolling lawns and meandering paths are shaded by scores of trees that grow right up to the main building. Then, from the moment you step into the building, you begin to feel a warm glow of kindness and understanding and purpose. And as you meet the students you become aware that this warmth is mutual.

Among the pictures and clippings in the Hammer School scrapbook you find a recent citation "for initiating new programs and pioneering new concepts of education for the retarded."

Hammer School teachers are careful to gauge their instruction to each individual. Each student has his limited "attention span" as well as different interests and capabilities. Some students receive only rudimentary instruction, guidance in kindergarten projects. Others attend "formal" classes in which standard texts for standard subjects are used. Everyone receives special attention to his speech, and music is a part of his daily program.

Training in handicrafts gives each student another opportunity to express himself and to take part in a meaningful activity. Even modest skills reward him with pride in his achievement. And later, this proficiency may be useful in his home, may even lead to employment.



When you watch Hammer School students at play, you are reminded that having fun is just a part of education. Minds are more likely to regain their health in healthy bodies. In the school's portable pool the romping and splashing are incidental to learning — from a Red Cross-trained instructor — how to stroke and float and be safe in the water. This is partly in preparation for periodic trips to a full-scale swimming pool nearby (in the company of friends from Wayzata Community Church).

Touch ball practice helps the boys develop coordination, agility, and alertness.

You expect Hammer School personnel to be specially trained. And it isn't surprising to learn that these people have been selected for their unusual personal attributes — which are sure to include wholehearted interest, enthusiasm, sensitivity, and dedication.

The visitor notes that teachers are patient yet firm, sympathetic yet emphatic. You don't hear teachers' voices raised or harsh words.

It's a revelation to talk with members of the staff. When they tell you what they're doing and why, you realize that what gratifies them most is the knowledge of accomplishment. They *share* the accomplishments of every student.

The staff consists of 5 teachers, a part-time wood-working instructor, 5 housemothers, 2 cooks and an assistant, laundress, cleaning lady, 2 'maids, and a caretaker. Some of the older students get paid for their housekeeping and yard work.

Members of Wayzata Community Church volunteer for many school projects, including visits to the public library, bowling alleys, and swimming pool.



Training in handicrafts serves three purposes. (It amuses the students and keeps them busy.) It gives them something useful to do and they are proud of making a contribution. And many of the things the students make are used to decorate their rooms. Some become gifts, and others are set aside to be sold at an annual open house.

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Patently instructed and carefully supervised, the students work with good, safe equipment and materials: almost everything from balloons to pipe cleaners to plastics. You admire the excellent work advanced students do in wood and ceramics. The rugs and table runners woven on the school's three cottage-industry-type looms.

The display in the school lobby gives you a good idea of the kinds of attractive and useful things Hammer School students "produce."



When you climb the stairs to the second story of the old garage building, you find yourself in a spacious, high-ceilinged woodworking shop. The equipment — all donated — is first-class and fully safe-guarded, and the shop is run by a professional instructor.

Bird houses are among the things students build for use or sale, and naturally bird watching is a favorite pastime.

The nursery-greenhouse on the grounds is another major project, a training ground for students and a source of income. The planning and the work was donated by the Minnetonka Garden Club with the help of another good friend, a former nurseryman.

Each year friends arrange a public sale of potted plants raised and cherished by the students. Usually this event is a sell-out!



"We want to have our students discover for themselves that, 'I belong here.' It is so different from, 'I have to be here.' "

The feeling of belonging to a group is a strong one at Hammer School. Friendships lead to a spirit of cooperation and a sense of responsibility. Students usually make their own beds and help roommates keep their rooms tidy. Some are given useful tasks in other parts of the school, training in self-sufficiency and preparation for hoped-for return to home and family.

When you are invited into the dormitories, you notice that the rooms have no doors. There's sufficient privacy, yet each student knows he's free to amble out at any time of night to visit with his housemother on the floor.

The new dormitory building has two floors'— boys on one, girls on the other — with ten 18'x12' rooms on each . . . plus a roomy sitting room. Usually two students share the companionship and duties of a room. Four older girls enjoy relative privacy in a cottage well away from the main building, where they engage in full scale domestic activities.



Now that you have reviewed this brief report on our school, we hope that you will visit us in the near future.



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